

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 3216

EXDIS, FROM CHARGE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, MARR, UNSC, LE, IS
SUBJ: SOUTH LEBANON--THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE LEBANESE ARMY TO THE
SOUTH

REF: (A) TEL AVIV 7374; (B) JERUSALEM 1592

1. THE RELATED QUESTIONS OF WHEN, IF AND UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS
THE LEBANESE ARMY (LAF) WILL GO SOUTH, AND ITS RELATIONSHIP
TO MAJOR HADDAD WHEN IT GETS THERE, ARE STILL VERY MUCH UNDER
DEBATE WITHIN THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT.

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2. ON JUNE 11 I HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS
WITH PRIME MINISTER HOSS AND MINISTER OF INTERIOR SALMAN.
REFERRING TO HADDAD, HOSS SAID THERE WERE TWO PROBLEMS:
HADDAD'S POSITION IN THE SOUTH AND HIS POSITION IN THE ARMY.
IN HOSS'S VIEW, THE FIRST PROBLEM HAD TO BE SOLVED BEFORE THE
SECOND COULD BE TACKLED. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE SAID, GENERAL
ERSKINE'S DECLARATION THE PREVIOUS DAY, THAT THE ISRAELIS

INTENDED TO TURN OVER RESPONSIBILITY IN PART OF SOUTH LEBANON AT LEAST TO HADDAD AND NOT REPEAT NOT TO UNIFIL WAS WORRYING. HOSS WAS VERY FIRM IN SAYING THAT IT WAS "NOT ACCEPTABLE" THAT HADDAD SHOULD EXERCISE ANY AUTHORITY OR RESPONSIBILITY AS THE AGENT OR REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GOL IN SOUTH LEBANON "EVEN FOR FIVE MINUTES". HADDAD HAD COMMITTED EXCESSES IN THE SOUTH AND HE WAS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO THE MOSLEMS LIVING THERE. HADDAD WILL NOT BE PUNISHED, HOSS SAID, BUT HE MUST BE REMOVED FROM THE SOUTH SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THE ENTRY OF THE LEBANESE ARMY. HOSS ALSO THOUGHT THAT HADDAD SHOULD BE RETIRED FROM THE ARMY AS PART OF A GENERAL THINNING OUT OF UNACCEPTABLE OFFICERS WHICH SHOULD TAKE PLACE BEFORE JUNE 30 (SEE BEIRUT 2998).

3. MINISTER OF INTERIOR SALMAN SAID THAT IN THE MEETING WITH SIILASVUO ON JUNE 5, SIILASVUO SAID THE ISRAELIS WANTED THREE CONCESSIONS: (1) A SECURITY ROLE FOR HADDAD IN HIS AREA OF OPERATIONS; (2) THE RIGHT TO MAINTAIN FOUR POSTS IN LEBANON AFTER THEIR WITHDRAWAL; AND (3) MAINTENANCE OF THE "GOOD FENCE" AS IS. THE LEBANESE HAD ASKED IF THESE WERE "CONDITIONS" FOR WITHDRAWAL OR SIMPLY "WISHES" AND SIILASVUO HAD SAID THEY WERE THE LATTER. THE GOL HAD EXPLAINED ITS DIFFICULTIES IN AGREEING TO ANY OF THESE CONCESSIONS. SALMAN SAID HE HAD SPECIFICALLY ASKED SIILASVUO IF IT WOULD BE EASIER FOR UNIFIL IF THE "GOOD FENCE" WERE OPEN OR CLOSED. SIILASVUO REPLIED IT WOULD BE EASIER FOR THE UN IF IT WERE CLOSED. SALMAN THEN COMMENTED

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THAT THE GOL WISHED TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO FACILITATE THE UNIFIL MISSION. HOWEVER, GOL APPARENTLY DID NOT SPECIFICALLY ASK THAT THE "GOOD FENCE" BE CLOSED IMMEDIATELY.

4. IN DISCUSSING THE PROBLEMS OF THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE LAF TO THE SOUTH, SALMAN SAID THAT SOME DECISION MUST BE MADE THIS MONTH. THE SYRIANS AND THE PALESTINIANS WERE SAYING THEY WOULD HELP BUT SALMAN WAS NOT CONFIDENT. SALMAN REMARKED THAT PRIME MINISTER HOSS WAS A GOOD MAN, BOTH COURAGEOUS AND HONEST, AND HE, TOO, WAS PUSHING FOR A DECISION THIS MONTH. WHETHER OR NOT SARKIS WOULD ACTUALLY ISSUE THE NECESSARY ORDERS, HOWEVER, WAS STILL UNCERTAIN. SALMAN DID NOT THINK THAT ANY DECISION WOULD BE MADE REGARDING THE FORCED RETIREMENT OF CERTAIN ARMY OFFICERS, INCLUDING HADDAD, BEFORE JUNE 30.

5. IN OUR CONVERSATION ON JUNE 12 (REPORTED SEPTTEL) FONMIN BOUTROS SAID THE MILITARY PLANNING FOR LAF DEPLOYMENT TO THE SOUTH HAD BEEN COMPLETED BUT THERE WERE STILL SOME POLITICAL PROBLEMS, INCLUDING ONE MAJOR ONE (UNSPECIFIED). HE SAID THAT HIS PRESENT "FEELING" WAS THAT THE ARMY WOULD MOVE SOUTH APPROXIMATELY 48 HOURS AFTER UNIFIL HAD TAKEN CONTROL OF THE AREA BUT HE WAS OBVIOUSLY NOT CERTAIN THAT ALL THE POLITICAL

PROBLEMS COULD BE WORKED OUT. (BOUTROS SAID IT TOOK THE CABINET SIX DAYS TO AGREE ON THE ORDERS THAT WERE SENT TO HADDAD.) HE REMARKED THAT ONE REASON FOR THE DIFFICULTY OF THE PROBLEMS IN SOUTH LEBANON WAS THAT THEY REPRESENTED THE ENTIRE LEBANESE POLITICAL PROBLEM IN MICROCOSM.

6. COMMENT: THESE CONVERSATIONS SUGGEST THAT SIILASVUO'S SKEPTICISM ABOUT IMMINENT ARRIVAL OF LAF IN SOUTH LEBANON (PARA 4, REF A) MAY BE JUSTIFIED. MUCH WILL DEPEND ON WHAT HAPPENS WHEN UNIFIL ENTERS HADDAD'S AREA OF OPERATIONS.
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